

Rawls's Mill, Battle of ^[1]

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by Wiley J. Williams, 2006, Additional research and revision by Alyssa Putt, 2022

The Civil War ^[2] battle at Rawls's Mill in Martin County ^[3] took place on November 2, 1862. Major General John G. Foster ^[4], commander of Union forces in North Carolina, was leading 5,000 soldiers from Washington, N.C., to Williamston after department New Bern when they were attacked by six Confederate ^[5] companies from the 26th Regiment ^[6] under the leadership of Colonel Henry "Harry" King Burgwyn Jr. ^[7]

At Rawls's Mill, approximately six miles south of Williamston, Foster's infantry, artillery, and cavalry fought a brief -- some sources say half-hour, while others say one hour -- battle with Burgwyn's troops, which had far fewer men and neither artillery nor cavalry at their disposal. The Confederates were driven from their works and across a bridge and burned the bridge to prevent pursuit. Nevertheless, this encounter was a trying ordeal for the green Union recruits of such regiments as the 44th Massachusetts, which had been organized only 60 days previously.

At approximately noon on November 3, Foster's army arrived at Williamston. They expected another fight, but the town was nearly deserted. The troops plundered the town, destroying everything that could not be taken.

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Subjects:

Battles ^[9]

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War ^[11]

Authors:

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Martin County ^[13]

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